

The Bells of St. Peter, Derby.

By GEORGE BAILEY.



THESE bells were removed from the old tower when it was taken down for the purpose of re-building it, and also extending the church westward. This afforded an opportunity for taking out the bells and sending them to Messrs. Taylor & Co., of Loughborough, for needed repairs and tuning.

It seemed desirable that a record of this event in the history of the bells should be recorded in this *Journal*. The copies of the inscriptions and dates here given, have been made from rubbings, taken as the bells were being placed on the Midland Co.'s dray for their journey to the foundry, on Nov. 30th, 1897. One of them appeared to have a hole in it near the mouth, and all were more or less weathered on the haunches, so rendering the legends and ornaments somewhat indistinct.

The inscriptions were as follows:—

No. 1.

❖ JESVS BE OVR SPEED ❖ IOHN DAYE ❖
❖ T ❖ H ❖ 1636 ~~~~~

No. 2.

❖ GOD ~~~~~ SAVE ~~~~~ OVR ~~~~~ KING
~~~~~ 1636 ~~~~~

## No. 3.

JOS: TABERER & HEN: EVERY. CH-WARDENS  
A ♣ R-1738.

## No. 4.

♣ GLOIRA DEO IN EXCELSIS ♣  
WILLIAM ♣ DVFFIELD ♣ THOMAS ♣ SKINNER ~~~~~  
C-W ~~~~~ T ♣ H 1636 ~~~~~

## No. 5.

I TO THE CHURCH THE LIVING CALL AND TO  
THE GRAVE DO SUMMON ALL ~~~~~ 1769 ~~~~~

It will have been noticed that the inscriptions show none of the quaintness of spelling usual in the period in which they came into existence, except that the arrangement, or reading, of the angels' anthem, is not usual; and that the *i* is placed before the *r* in "Gloria." All the letterings, except those on the last bell, have the old form of *v*, and the *u* in that is a medieval one. The *fleur-de-lis* is freely used for dividing sentences, initials, and names. There are long ornamental scrolls in the unoccupied spaces; but no elaborately ornamented capital letters, such as are found on the bells of All Saints' and others in the county. There is only one, No. 3, that has a founder's mark, *the bell* of Abraham Rudhall, and No. 5 has no founder's name or mark, but the letters used upon it are of an excellent type for clearness and sharpness. The inscription on this bell being long, allows no space for ornamental scrolls, in which it is altogether lacking. We are inclined to think that No. 3 must have been recast, as it bears the date 1738, and comes between the 2nd and the 4th, which are dated 1636. By this we conclude there were originally four bells of the latter date.

It would be interesting to ascertain who was intended by the letters "T. H.," found on Nos. 1 and 4 of the 1636 bells. We venture to suggest that they indicate a member of the

family of Hedderly, especially as that name is found on so many bells in this County. The earliest mention of that name found in connection with Derbyshire bells is on one at Findern, which is dated 1704, and bears the name of Daniel Hedderly, who was of Bawtry, Yorks., and there is another of his bells at Breadsall, dated 1728. There is only a difference of sixty-eight years between 1704 and 1636, so that these bells might easily have been the work of Daniel's father, or uncle, whose name we may assume to have been Thomas. There was a John Hedderly, of Derby, who recast the great bell at Melbourne in 1732\* ; also Thomas Hedderly, of Nottingham, whose name occurs frequently on bells in the County, *e.g.*, at Mickleover, 1742 ; West Hallam, 1743 ; Weston-on-Trent, 1760 ; Heanor, 1781, and of the same date at Allestree. After him came George Hedderly, whose name is found at Rosliston, 1778-1788-9 ; again at Breadsall, 1786, and at Allestree, 1790 ; also at Risley, of same year. Messrs. Taylor, of Loughborough, have informed me that there is a bell at St. John Baptist's, Stowe, Staffs., dated 1632, which has the same letters, "T. H.," upon it.† Though I have made numerous inquiries from gentlemen learned in bells, I have, so far, been unable to obtain any information leading to the identification of "T. H.;" but the Rev. Canon Raven, D.D., has written me that R. C. Hope, Esq., F.S.A., in an article in the *Archæological Journal*, No. 198, Vol. L., names a Thomas Handcock, of Walsall, who was a Bellfounder in 1636, and he may be the founder of this bell.

### S. Peter's, Derby.

From observations made by Mr. George Bailey during the recent demolition of the tower of S. Peter's, Derby, in 1898, it would conclusively appear that the original tower was of Norman

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\* See *Churches of Derbyshire*, Vol. III., p. 407 ; also *Reliquary*, Vol. XIV., p. 225, where an agreement between him and others is quoted *re* this bell.

† See Lynam's *Church Bells of Co. Stafford*, plate 80.

construction, and that it was brought into its latest form some time about the year 1470. The Rev. J. C. Cox, LL.D., in his *Churches of Derbyshire*, considers that the tower arch was reconstructed during the fourteenth century. This will be reinstated. The responds of the nave arcades on both sides of the old tower arch still retain their mutilated Norman capitals. The tower once opened into the south aisle, but the archway was subsequently blocked. The finely moulded base of its western respond was found in the south-west corner. Here, too, at the back of it, was observed the curvature of the newell stairway once leading into the belfry chamber. Above this blocked tower archway were seen remains of a window much like the windows of the south clerestory.

On digging for the new foundations it was found that on the north side, the old wall had rested on six iron-shod piles covered with oak slabs fastened together with "dog-irons" secured by long nails. Three of the piles taken out were three feet in length, and appeared to have been driven into the place of an old interment. They were in good preservation. The tower pinnacles and gurgoyles were much decayed. One of the best of the pinnacles has been erected in the centre of the churchyard. The parapet was repaired in 1825 under the care of "W. T." and "R. S.," the then churchwardens. "I. H. O. GIPSON" had immortalized himself on one of the belfry windows in "APRIL, 1829"—perhaps one of the ringers. The old capstone of the newell was found decorated with roughly cut leaves. Among the *débris* of the tower walls were the bases of two small Norman shafts. Besides these were found a piece of an incised alabaster slab, with remains of some ornament, and three or four letters undecipherable; a fragment of a black glazed mug of three handles, one only of which remained; a gimlet; a pair of small iron compasses; a currier's knife; and two bits of painted glass. The most curious thing, however, was turned up in getting out the soil for the extension of the north aisle. This was a circular leaden talisman, about four inches in diameter.

The round edges were closed over like lids, so as to form a central square. On opening these a circle was found on two opposite flaps: one of these contained a compass, and within its extended points four crescents, with other astronomical signs. The inner square was divided into nine smaller squares by cross lines, each of these containing a number. A jetton by Hans Kravwinckle (of Nuremburg), with the legend "Gotis reich blibt ewick," interpreted as "The kingdom of God remaineth for ever," completes the list.